Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy

Management Plan

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Gitga'at First Nation

BRITISH COLUMBIA | BC Parks

Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy Management Plan

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Plan Highlights

Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy is 20 kilometres south of the Gitga'at community of Hartley Bay. The conservancy includes all of Fin Island, and the foreshore area and land covered by water within 200 metres of the high tide line. It is within the traditional territory of the Gitga'at First Nation. The conservancy has high cultural and coastal marine values, including a unique shell spit known for its clam beds, and several protected anchorages that are popular with mariners.

The Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy Management Plan identifies objectives and strategies that focus on:

- Protecting historically and currently used First Nation habitation and harvesting areas and activities, and associated cultural and biological values,[1] and providing for and promoting present and future First Nations access to those areas and activities;
- Maintaining representative flora and fauna, protecting at risk plant communities and animal species, and protecting special natural features in both terrestrial and marine environments;
- Protecting the recreation values associated with moorage sites in Brant and Curlew bays that in turn support opportunities for wilderness-based boating, kayaking, and salt water angling; and,
- Providing for sustainable economic opportunities by supporting use of Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy for commercial recreation purposes and the establishment of a commercial shellfish operation in Hawk Bay.

[1] See Turner, N.J. 2007. Importance of Biodiversity for First Peoples of British Columbia. Paper prepared for the Biodiversity BC Technical Subcommittee.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction 1

1.1 Management Plan Purpose 1

1.2 Planning Area 1

1.3 Legal Framework and Management Commitments 1

1.4 Planning Process 4

1.5 Community Involvement 4

2.0 Values and Roles of the Conservancy 6

2.1 Significance in the Protected Areas System 6

2.2 Social, Ceremonial and Cultural Uses and Cultural Heritage 6

2.3 Biological Diversity and Natural Environment 8

2.4 Recreation 9

2.5 Development or Use of Natural Resources 10

3.0 Management Direction 12

3.1 Vision 12

3.2 Management Goals and Objectives 12

3.3 Management Issues, Strategies and Success Indicators 13

3.4 Zoning 19

4.0 Plan Implementation 24

4.1 Implementation Resources 24

4.2 Priority Implementation 25

4.3 Bi-annual Report 25

4.4 Management Plan Review 25

5.0 References 26

Appendix 1: Appropriate Uses Table 27

Figure 1. Regional Context Map 3

Figure 2. Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy 7

Figure 3. Management Zones in Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy. 20

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Management Plan Purpose

The purpose of this management plan is to guide management of the Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy. The management plan:

- describes the background and legal context of the conservancy;
- sets out a vision and role for the conservancy, along with strategic goals and objectives;
- identifies management objectives, strategies and success indicators for the conservancy;
- identifies zones where area-specific objectives and strategies apply; and,
- identifies an implementation and monitoring program.

1.2 Planning Area

Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy is 20 kilometres south of Hartley Bay, 100 kilometres southwest of Kitimat and 130 kilometres southeast of Prince Rupert (Figure 1). The 1,902 hectare conservancy (1,234 hectares of upland, 668 hectares of foreshore) encompasses all of Fin Island, and the foreshore and intertidal areas covered by water within 200 metres of the high tide line.

Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy is within the traditional territory of the Gitga'at First Nation. Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy has been used since time immemorial by the Gitga'at and other First Nations people for cultural, social and economic purposes. It has high intertidal values, including a unique shell spit known for its clam beds, and has several protected anchorages that are popular with mariners.

Access to Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy is primarily by boat and there are a number of sheltered inlets suitable for anchoring. Floatplane and helicopter access is possible at suitable shoreline and onshore landing locations.

1.3 Legal Framework and Management Commitments

Interest in establishing Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Island as a protected area first emerged during preparation of the Protected Areas Strategy in the mid 1990s. The Gitga'at First Nation designated Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Island as a protected area in their 2003 land use plan, and proposed its formal designation under provincial legislation during the North Coast Land and Resource Management Plan process. The North Coast Land and Resource Management planning process recommended protection of Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Island as part of a broader system of coastal protected areas.

Agreement to formally establish Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Island as a protected area was achieved through land use discussions involving Gitga'at First Nation and the Province of British Columbia, with input from other First Nations, as documented in signed strategic land use planning agreements.

The Province of British Columbia formally established the conservancy on July 14, 2006. Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy is described in Schedule E of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*, and administered under the *Park Act*.

Section 8 of the *Park Act* directs that any interest in land in a conservancy must be authorized by a park use permit. Section 9 directs that most uses of a natural resource in a conservancy must be authorized by a park use permit. A park use permit can only be issued if the use or activity will not hinder, restrict, prevent or inhibit the development or use of the conservancy in accordance with the four reasons for setting aside a conservancy, which are:

a) The protection and maintenance of their biological diversity and natural environments;

b) The preservation and maintenance of social, ceremonial and cultural uses of first nations;

c) The protection and maintenance of their recreation values; and,

d) To ensure that development or use of their natural resources occurs in a sustainable manner consistent with the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) and(c).

The *Park Act* further states that a park use permit must not be issued to authorize commercial logging, mining, or hydroelectric power generation, other than local run-of-the-river projects. "Local run-of-the-river projects", in relation to a conservancy, means run-of-the-river projects supplying power for use (a) in the conservancy, or (b) by communities, including first nation communities, that do not otherwise have access to hydroelectric power.

The Ministry of Environment has signed collaborative management agreements with the Gitga'at and the Gitxaala First Nations. Collaborative management agreements between First Nations and the Ministry of Environment define how First Nations and the Ministry of Environment will collaborate to prepare a management plan for the various conservancies within a traditional territory. The collaborative management agreements also provide for First Nation-Ministry of Environment collaboration in the ongoing conservancy administration, including review and recommendations on park use permit issuance and coordination between the BC Parks' Park Ranger Program and the First Nations' Watchmen programs.

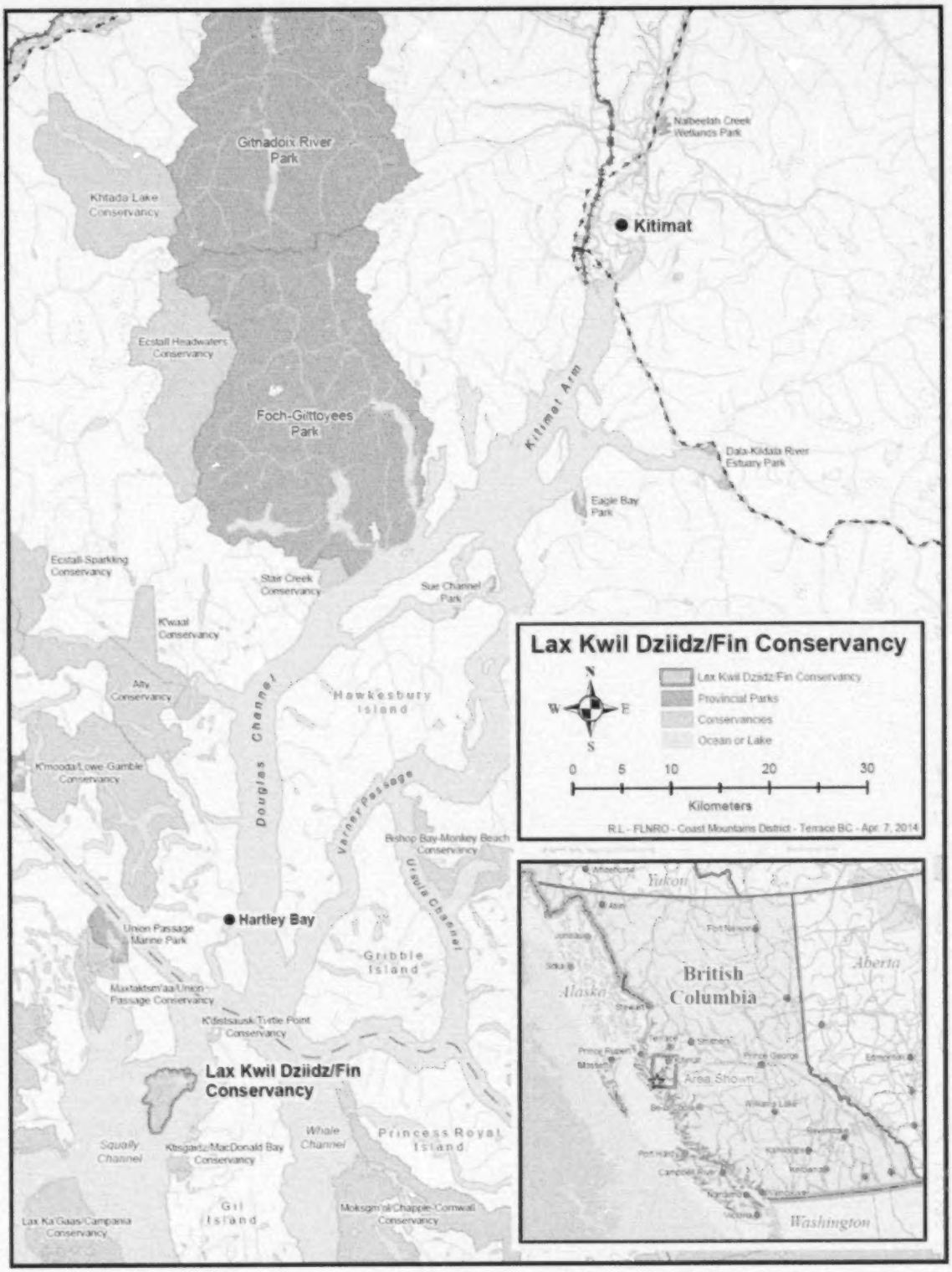

Figure 1. Regional Context Map

1.4 Planning Process

Gitga'at First Nation and the Ministry of Environment initiated management planning for Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy in 2006 as part of a broader effort to prepare management plans for all the new North and Central Coast conservancies. The broader effort included a public open house in Prince Rupert to gather input regarding management issues within the conservancies north of Khutze Inlet.

In May 2007, the Ministry of Environment and three regional First Nation forums (i.e., Coastal First Nations, North Coast Tsimshian and Nanwakolas) developed policy guidelines and a template for preparing conservancy management plans. This management plan is based on that format and integrates information and direction from land and protected area agreements signed between the First Nations and the Province of British Columbia. By September 2007, the Gitga'at First Nation and the Ministry of Environment had agreed to a process and timeline for preparing a management plan for Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy.

In the fall of 2007 and spring of 2008, Gitga'at First Nation and Ministry of Environment staff, with the support of Rainforest Solutions Project, tested first steps of the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation, developed by the Conservation Measures Partnership and originally developed by The Nature Conservancy. The final management plan built on this initial work and focussed on finalizing the management plan in accordance with the template developed between the Ministry of Environment and Coastal First Nations. As part of finalization, the planning team identified key natural and cultural values for the conservancy, along with recreational and economic interests. Key management objectives, issues, strategies and success indicators for the conservancy were then developed.

In the spring of 2009, a draft management plan for public review was shared at open houses held in Kitimat and Prince Rupert. The public review draft was also posted to the BC Parks' website for broader comment and circulation.

Throughout this period, the Ministry of Environment also shared copies of the draft management plan and engaged with the Gitxaala First Nation on management planning. Gitxaala First Nation is focusing its management planning efforts on key protected areas closer to the main Gitxaala village on Dolphin Island.

1.5 Community Involvement

The Gitga'at people in Hartley Bay will play a key role in the management of the conservancy, due to their strong cultural ties and economic interest in the island.

Other nearby aboriginal communities includes the Kitasoo community of Klemtu (80 kilometres to the southeast), the Gitxaala community of Kitkatla on Dolphin Island (80

kilometres to the northwest) and Kitamaat, a Haisla community (90 kilometres to the northeast).

The closest non-aboriginal communities are the communities of Kitimat and Prince Rupert. The conservancy is within the Kitimat-Stikine Regional District whose administrative offices are located in Terrace.

Ongoing engagement with local aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities will be required to ensure that residents are aware of, and supportive of, the Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy. Engagement will include continued dialogue with provincial and local recreational and environmental groups who have expressed interest in the recreational use and development of the conservancy's sheltered bays. Most outreach activities will be generally delivered as part of sharing information on the BC Parks' system of protected areas, and more specifically as part of sharing information on North Coast conservancies. Conservancy specific issues will be discussed as issues or interests arise.

Collaboration between the Ministry of Environment North Coast Park Ranger program and the Gitga'at Stewardship Program, along with community outreach activities, will help to increase First Nation and non-aboriginal community awareness and engagement in the management of Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy.

2.0 Values and Roles of the Conservancy

2.1 Significance in the Protected Areas System

Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy is significant in the protected areas system because it:

- protects the entirety of a small island (except for the small Indian Reserve) representative of the Hecate Lowlands Ecosection;
- protects a First Nation seasonal camp and harvesting area;
- protects a small but important clam bed; and,
- protects the recreation values associated with moorage sites in Brant and Curlew bays that in turn support opportunities for wilderness-based boating, kayaking, and salt water angling.

2.2 Social, Ceremonial and Cultural Uses and Cultural Heritage

Values

The Gitga'at and other First Nation people have been occupying and collecting food and materials from Lax Kwil Dziidz since time immemorial. The Gitga'at maintained a seasonal village on the east shore of the island, primarily as a base for harvesting clams from the beds on the nearby spit. The seasonal village was also used as a base for harvesting halibut, sea cucumber and other marine species from nearby waters, along with a variety of shoreline and intertidal plants.[2] [3]

Archaeological values within the conservancy are high, although a shell midden on the east side of the island is the only archaeological site registered with the British Columbia Archaeological Branch. Gitga'at Elders indicate the conservancy contains many other unrecorded cultural heritage and archaeological sites. "Lachkul-jeets" Indian Reserve (IR), No. 6, District Lot 2575, is located on the island and is the only parcel of land that is not part of Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy (Figure 2).

Role

Protection of Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Island will help to preserve and maintain the ongoing social, ceremonial and cultural use of Lax Kwil Dziidz with a focus on protecting historically and currently used seasonal camps and harvesting areas. It is expected that the conservancy will encourage present and future First Nations access to these key areas in a way that does not diminish the areas' cultural and biological values[4].

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[2] For further information see: Turner, N. J. and J. C. Thompson (eds.). 2006. "Plants of the Gitga'at People. 'Nwana'a lax Yuup". Gitga'at First Nation and Coasts Under Stress Research Project, Victoria, BC: Cortex Consulting.

[3] For information on Tsimshian intertidal harvesting see: "Port Simpson Foods", by the People of Port Simpson and School District No. 52.

[4] See Turner, N.J. 2007. Importance of Biodiversity for First Peoples of British Columbia. Paper prepared for the Biodiversity BC Technical Subcommittee.

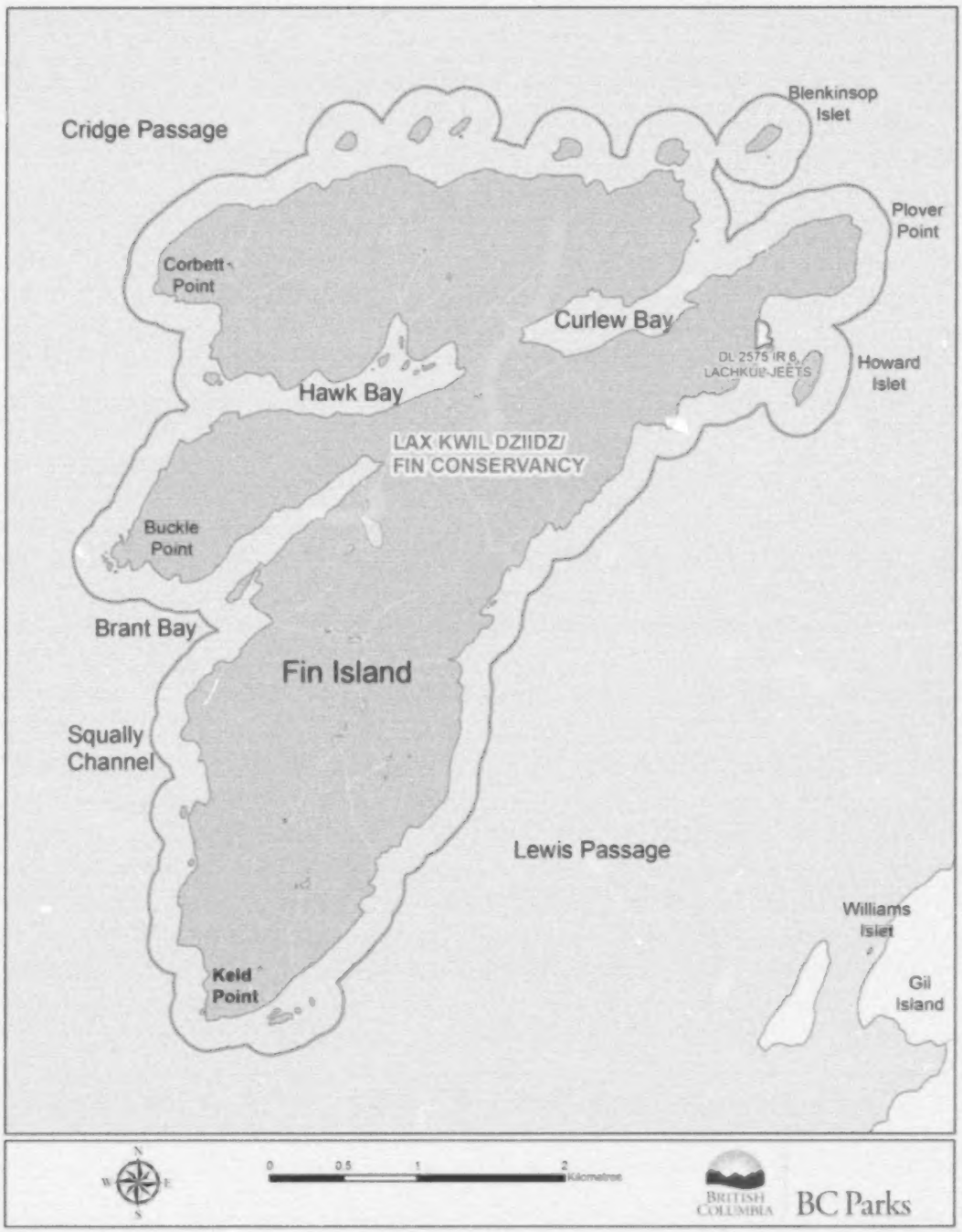

Figure 2. Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy

2.3 Biological Diversity and Natural Environment

Values

Remote Location

The remote location of Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy provides an excellent opportunity to maintain biological diversity and natural environment values. This is enhanced by the fact that the entire island is included in the conservancy. The adjacent land is not protected and is just under two kilometres off of the north coast and three kilometres off of the east coast. Many organisms can swim, fly or raft that distance making the island an important stepping stone along the coast.

Clam Beds

Muddy beaches encompassing approximately 34 hectares along the northeast portion of the island contain important clam beds.

A shell spit adjacent to the clam beds joins a small island to the south of Fin Island to Howard Islet. These are rare landforms, particularly those made of shells. Another unique feature is a productive area of forest growing on a raised beach of shells that has developed adjacent to the clam bed.

Marine Environments and Features

The island's foreshore and marine environments provide important habitat for a number of key marine wildlife species.

Both the Humpback Whale and the Killer Whale are identified species at risk that are known to use the waters surrounding the conservancy.

The conservancy contains 14 hectares of good marbled murrelet habitat, which although small, provides important habitat when combined with other marbled murrelet habitat in nearby areas. The habitat should not be disturbed by conservancy use and development.

Areas of the conservancy valued for intertidal resources include an area along the island's north shore which supports commercially harvested sea cucumber populations.

Fresh water is in limited supply on the island and is principally restricted to three tiny unnamed first-order channels.

Wolf Rearing Ground

Elders in Hartley Bay have suggested that Fin Island may be a rearing ground for wolves.

Ecosection Representation

The conservancy protects an entire small island (with the exception of the small IR) and associated islets within the Hecate Lowland Ecosection. Overall provincially, 26.5% of

the Hecate Lowland Ecosection is protected. Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy itself represents less than 1/10 of 1% of this terrestrial ecosection. Representative of the Hecate Lowland Ecosection, the conservancy terrain is rolling and rocky with bogs and low productivity forests dominating the vegetation.

Some productive forests occur on moderate and steep slopes. Western redcedar, western hemlock, yellow-cedar, shore pine and Sitka spruce are the main tree species. Most of the island is classed as Coastal Western Hemlock - Central Very Wet Hypermaritime Variant (CWHvh2) according to the province's Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification (BEC) system.[5]

The marine portion of the conservancy is in the North Coast Fjords Marine Ecosection, and protects 668 hectares of this 960,000 hectare ecosection. Currently, the 668 hectares of marine foreshore protection represents over 10% of the overall protected area within this ecosection.

Role

The role of Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy in protecting biological diversity and natural environments is to maintain representative flora and fauna, focusing on protecting plant and animal communities and species at risk. Providing protection to the important clam beds found in this conservancy will be a key priority for the management of this conservancy. Providing protection to the special natural features in both the terrestrial and the marine environments will also be important aspects of the conservancy's management.

2.4 Recreation

Values

Recreational opportunities in or near to Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy include camping, wilderness hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing and boating. There are currently no designated camping sites on the island, although some areas such as the north shore of Curlew Bay do offer good onshore camping opportunities. There is also a small Gitga'at Stewardship Program cabin located on the east shoreline near Howard Islet, which can be used by kayaker and boat campers for emergency purposes. Hawk Bay is classed as a Boat Haven by the Council of BC Yacht Clubs, and Brant Bay and Curlew Bay have sheltered anchorages. In the Valued Marine Environments and/or Features database, the marine areas around Fin Island are rated as medium for SCUBA diving.

In recent decades, clam beds along the northeast shore of the island were harvested for recreational purposes. However, the recreational harvest of shellfish has been closed by Ocean and Fisheries due to biotoxin/red-tide concerns.

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[5] For further information see: "A Field Guide for Site Identification and Interpretation for the Vancouver Forest Region", R. N. Green and K. Klinka, Ministry of Forests Research Branch, 1994.

There is a guided hunting certificate that includes Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy but the conservancy is not currently used for guided hunting.

A floating fishing lodge recently utilized Hawk Bay as one of its seasonal bases for its operations. In 2009, the permittee for the fishing lodge voluntarily gave up its interest in Hawk Bay in order to avoid conflicts with the developing shellfish aquaculture operation. Other local sports fishing guide operations occasionally use Hawk Bay and other protected anchorages on Fin Island as their base of operations, as do several of the wilderness tourism sail and power boat operators that use North and Central Coast waters.

The recreation and tourism opportunities in the conservancy are enhanced by proximity to marine travel routes and other marine-based protected areas (Figure 1) including Union Passage Marine Park (10 kilometres to the north), Monckton Nii Łuutiksm Conservancy (8 kilometres to the west), Lax ka'gaas/Campania Conservancy (10 kilometres to the southwest), and K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Conservancy (22 kilometres to the south).

Role

The role of Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy is to protect and maintain key recreational values, with management focusing on protecting and enhancing opportunities for boat anchorage, kayaking, salt water angling and camping and day-hiking.

2.5 Development or Use of Natural Resources

Values

A tenure (SK08116487) for shellfish aquaculture in Hawk Bay and a registered trapline (611T026) are the only existing commercial natural resource use tenures in the conservancy.

Nearby marine waters are used by angling guides, commercial fishermen and commercial invertebrate and kelp harvesters. Forest harvesting occurs on nearby islands including Gil, Farrant and Pitt islands, although parts of each island are protected as conservancies (Figure 1). Nearby, the Inside Passage is used extensively by cruise ships, cargo ships and ferries. The waters adjacent to the conservancy are also part of the shipping lane into and out of Kitimat.

In the past, commercial sea urchin, sea cucumber and clam harvesting from the intertidal areas around Fin Island have contributed to the local and regional economies. At one time a small commercial clam processing plant operated in the Clamstown site on the east shore of the island. More recently, the Gitga'at have been piloting commercial growth of shellfish in Hawk Bay, with a view toward establishing a commercial shellfish aquaculture operation.

Role

The role of Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy in providing for the development and use of natural resources is focused primarily on providing and supporting existing public and commercial use of sheltered moorages, and supporting an opportunity for a commercial shellfish operation in Hawk Bay.

3.0 Management Direction

3.1 Vision

The Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy protects and sustains the Gitga'at and other First Nations' social, ceremonial and cultural values and uses. The conservancy contributes to protection of rare terrestrial and intertidal ecosystems and biophysical features such as the clam beds, and provides recreational opportunities in a wilderness environment. It also provides local communities with opportunities for compatible, sustainable economic development.

3.2 Management Goals and Objectives

The priority general management goals for Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy are related to the conservancy purposes established in the *Park Act*, tailored to the specific values found in the conservancy and to the role the conservancy plays in the broader system of protected areas (Table 1). Management objectives establish more specific direction from which management strategies for the conservancy are identified.

Table 1. Management Goals and Objectives for Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy

Overall Management Goals	General Management Objectives
Preserve and Maintain Social, Ceremonial and Cultural Uses and Cultural Heritage Values	• Identify, protect and maintain Gitga'at and other First Nations' cultural heritage, and traditional use sites and features. • Identify, protect and maintain known archaeological and historic sites. • Provide for and promote Gitga'at and other First Nations' traditional and sustenance uses and harvesting activities.
Protect and Maintain the Diversity of Terrestrial and Intertidal Ecosystems	• Identify and protect regionally rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species. • Identify and protect special ecological features. • Sustain the abundance and distribution of wildlife, and intertidal and subtidal species.
Assess, Maintain and Enhance Recreational Values and Uses	• Identify and enhance recreation values. • Provide visitors with safe cultural and wilderness recreation opportunities.
Provide for Compatible Development or Use of Natural Resources	• Identify and allocate commercial opportunities to assist local economic diversification, particularly for First Nations. • Sustainably manage commercial tourism opportunities.

3.3 Management Issues, Strategies and Success Indicators

Based on the purposes, roles, vision and goals identified for the conservancy, and through analysis of key issues which may affect achievement of stated objectives, management strategies for each management objective for the conservancy have been identified.

Social, Ceremonial and Cultural Uses & Cultural Heritage Values

Key issues which may affect achievement of stated First Nations' cultural objectives in the conservancy relate primarily to the lack of detailed inventories on key values and the lack of information about current and potential impacts from recreational use and commercial harvesting. Identified strategies focus on resolving or managing these issues (Table 2).

Table 2. Objectives, Issues, Results and Strategies for First Nations' Social, Ceremonial and Cultural Uses and Cultural Heritage Values

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Success Indicators
Identify, protect and maintain First Nations' cultural heritage, and traditional use sites and features.	First Nations' cultural heritage sites and features are not well documented but are known to exist in the area.	Perform historical and ethnographic research, and cultural heritage field inventories.	Completed historical and ethnographic research and cultural heritage field inventories.
	With more detailed information on cultural heritage and traditional use sites and features, more specific protection measures can be put in place.	Identify threats to cultural heritage and traditional use sites and features and, as necessary, implement protective measures which may include: - marking areas as off-limits for public and commercial access; and, - focus use away from known sites.	Cultural heritage sites and features mapped and protected. No go areas established or visitor routes rerouted at identified vulnerable sites.
Identify, protect and maintain known archaeological and historic sites.	Historic and archaeological sites are not well documented but are known to exist in the area.	Perform reconnaissance and site-level historical/archaeological site field assessments in conjunction with any cultural heritage field inventories.	Completed reconnaissance and site-level historical site assessments.

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Success Indicators
	With more detailed information on historic/archaeological sites, more specific protection measures can be put in place.	Identify threats to historic/archaeological sites and, as necessary, implement protective measures which may include: - marking areas as off-limits for public and commercial access; and, - focus use away from known sites.	Historic and archaeological sites mapped and protected.
	Shoreline erosion may impact archaeological values.	Monitor erosion near known archaeological values and, if required, undertake measures to maintain cultural values such as excavation.	
Provide for and promote Gitga'at and other First Nations' traditional and sustenance uses and harvesting activities.	Traditional and sustenance harvesting activities are not well documented.	Support efforts to identify and monitor traditional and sustenance harvesting activities.	Completed inventories of traditional use and subsistence harvesting areas.
	Without monitoring it is difficult to determine if overharvesting of marine resources is an issue.	Support efforts to determine the baseline clam population, and monitor the clam population and harvest levels.	Baseline inventories completed; monitoring indicates stable population levels.
	Large vessel wake poses a safety hazard for those engaged in traditional use activities (e.g. seaweed harvesting, clam/cockle harvesting).	Work to ensure federal agencies (e.g. Transport Canada, Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency), and their relevant review processes (e.g. TERMPOL[6], Environmental Assessment) are informed of these impacts with the intent to mitigate (e.g. reduce vessel speed, recommend alternative routes).	No incidents reported with undertaking traditional use activities.

[6] TERMPOL (Technical Review Process of Marine Terminal Systems and Transshipment Sites) is a voluntary shipping review process led by Transport Canada that assesses the safety and risks associated with oil/gas tanker movements to, from and around Canada's marine terminals.

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Success Indicators
	Spills, sewage and other disturbance from commercial marine transportation and recreation boating activity may impact intertidal and subtidal areas.	Encourage appropriate agencies to develop or fund a water quality monitoring and shellfish hydrocarbon contamination monitoring program in conjunction with other regional initiatives.	Water quality monitoring program implemented.
		As appropriate, use pamphlets or other communication material to inform and discourage the discharge of bilges and sewage in or around the clam beds.	
To ensure burial sites with cultural significance are identified within the traditional territory.	Gitga'at has identified Lax Kwil Dziidz as a key area for future burial.	Locate a burial site in an appropriate location.	Burial site is available.

Biological Diversity and Natural Environment

Key issues which may affect achievement of stated biological diversity objectives in Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy relate primarily to lack of detailed inventories and potential impacts from recreational use and commercial harvesting within the conservancy. Identified strategies focus on resolving or managing these issues (Table 3).

Table 3. Objectives, Issues, Strategies and Success Indicators for Biological Diversity

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Success Indicators
Identify and protect regionally rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species.	Increased knowledge about the area's ecological values may help avoid unintended impacts on the protected area's rare ecosystems, plant and intertidal communities and terrestrial and marine species.	Inventory terrestrial, intertidal and marine ecosystems, communities and species, focusing on rare and at risk ecosystems, communities and species.	Completed inventories of rare and at risk terrestrial, intertidal and marine ecosystems, ecological communities and species.
		Prior to development of infrastructure (e.g., tent pads, trails, etc.) complete site specific inventory of rare and at risk ecosystems, communities and species.	Rare ecosystems inventoried prior to upland development.
			No impact on rare ecosystems from upland development.

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Success Indicators
	Public and commercial access and use may cause site-level disturbance or cause declines in the abundance and distribution of rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species.	Where necessary, limit public and commercial access to protect rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species.	Protective measures implemented, as appropriate: - signs prohibiting harvesting and access; - marking areas with rare communities as off-limits; and, - distribute maps showing prohibited areas.
Identify and protect special ecological features in both terrestrial and marine environments.	Improved inventory of special ecological features (e.g., clam beds) would improve the protection of these values.	Inventory special ecological features (e.g., clam beds).	Completed inventories of special ecological features.
	Public and commercial access and use may disturb special ecological features.	If recreational and commercial disturbance causes unacceptable impacts to special ecological features (e.g., clam beds), establish specific "no-go" areas.	Protective measures implemented, as appropriate: - marking areas with special ecological features as off-limits; and, - distribute maps showing prohibited areas.
	Large vessel wake may erode clam/cockle beds, beaches and other intertidal values.	Monitor intertidal values and work to ensure federal agencies (e.g. Transport Canada, Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency), and their relevant review processes (TERMPOL, Environmental Assessment) are informed of these impacts with the intent to mitigate (e.g. reduce vessel speed, recommend alternative routes).	Intertidal shellfish abundance and diversity is monitored and sustained. Changes to the beach (e.g. erosion) are monitored.
Sustain the abundance and distribution of wildlife and intertidal and subtidal species.	Populations of wildlife and intertidal and subtidal species are small so they will be adversely impacted by high levels of harvesting activity.	Monitor and, if necessary, encourage the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to limit recreational catch of clams, crabs, sea urchins, etc.	Populations of wildlife, intertidal and subtidal species are monitored and sustained.

Recreation

Key issues which may affect achievement of stated recreational value objectives in Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy relate primarily to lack of detailed inventories, lack of infrastructure, and potential impacts from recreational over use and from commercial harvesting within the conservancy. Identified strategies focus on resolving or managing these issues (Table 4).

Table 4. Objectives, Issues, Results and Strategies for Recreation

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Success Indicators
Identify and enhance recreational values.	Incomplete knowledge of current recreational use levels and use patterns makes it difficult to enhance future recreational experiences.	Develop a baseline inventory of current and potential recreational use.	Completed baseline inventory of recreational opportunities and use.
		Implement a Backcountry Recreational Impact Monitoring (BRIM) assessment on recreation sites.	Annual Gitga'at Watchman and BC Parks' Ranger monitoring reports with BRIM reports every three years[7].
	Lack of recreation infrastructure prevents recreational use by visitors with small craft. The areas popular for camping and day use (e.g., Curlew Bay and Brant Bay) are also the areas noted as being highly sensitive to sea level rise.	In Brant Bay **or** Curlew Bay, support small scale onshore development of infrastructure to support short -term camping and day use (e.g., tent sites, outhouses). In the bay not selected for such development, on shore use should not be promoted.	Construction and maintenance of small scale onshore infrastructure in Brant Bay or Curlew Bay (but not both).
	Limited public knowledge of the recreation values and opportunities reduces the level of recreation use.	Identify recreation opportunities and facilities in promotional and marketing materials prepared for BC Parks.	Development and distribution of promotional information and materials.
Provide visitors with safe cultural and wilderness recreation opportunities.	Limited availability of cultural interpretation and guiding services limits the cultural tourism experience available to visitors.	Gitga'at Stewardship Program will develop cultural interpretation and guiding services.	Implementation of cultural interpretation and guiding by Gitga'at Stewardship Program.

[7] As part of a system of ongoing monitoring plan priorities for where Backcountry Recreation Impact Monitoring Reports will be completed will be set; however, a priority for these assessments is anticipated to be in the cultural use zone and surrounding facilities if developed in either Brant or Curlew bays.

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Success Indicators
	Frequent air access (e.g., helicopters and float planes) may disturb recreation use.	Direct commercial aircraft to land in areas of the conservancy where the recreational experience is not contingent on a wilderness experience. Commercial aircraft will be requested to avoid the use of Brant Bay and Curlew Bay unless use of these bays is specifically required.	Commercial aircraft landings are directed to areas outside of Brant Bay and Curlew Bay.

Development or Use of Natural Resources

Key issues which may affect achievement of stated resource development or use objectives in Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy relate primarily to lack of facilities, lack of awareness of available local services and facilities, and potential conflict between cultural, recreational and commercial use of specific areas and resources within the conservancy. Identified strategies focus on resolving or managing these issues (Table 5).

Table 5. Objectives, Issues, Results and Strategies for Development or Use of Natural Resources

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Success Indicators
Identify and allocate commercial opportunities to assist local economic diversification, particularly for area First Nations.	Gitga'at First Nation is developing and working to implement a cultural and wildlife viewing tourism enterprise.	Support development of Gitga'at operated cultural and wildlife viewing activities.	Increased operations and guiding revenues to Gitga'at programs and enterprises[8].
	Tourism operators from other areas have an interest in using the conservancy.	Encourage tourism operators to establish partnerships with the Gitga'at[9].	Number of partnership agreements between tourism operators and the Gitga'at.

[8] This success indicator is for Gitga'at internal use.

[9] This is intended to reflect Collaborative Management Agreement Language reading "The Province encourages holders of and applicants for Permits to build mutually beneficial relationships with the Gitga'at First Nation regarding conservation and use of the Protected Areas within the Traditional Territory".

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Success Indicators
Sustainably manage commercial tourism opportunities.		Identify and allocate opportunities to assist local economic diversification, particularly of area First Nations.	Number of commercial operating days and total revenues to Gitga'at programs and enterprises.
		Support appropriate use of the area for tourism purposes.	Allocation of park use permits for appropriate activities.
	Commercial services (e.g., fuel station, marina, accommodation) in Hartley Bay are underutilized.	Encourage conservancy users to utilize local services in Hartley Bay.	Increased revenues to local service providers in Hartley Bay.

3.4 Zoning

Zoning assists in the planning and management of protected areas. In general terms, zoning divides an area into logical units to apply consistent management objectives. The management zones identified in the conservancy reflect the intended land use, the acceptable level of development and use, and the level of management required (Figure 3).

Management direction applicable to the whole of the conservancy is described in Section 3.3. Appropriate uses for the conservancy zones are identified in Appendix 1. In addition to the prescribed appropriate uses and the direction contained in Section 3.3, the following pages describe resource issues, results and strategies specific to identified zones (Tables 6 and 7). This level of additional direction is provided to highlight an identified issue that is of particular emphasis or relevance within a specific zone/management unit.

The following zones have been identified within the conservancy:

- **Gitga'at Cultural Use Zone**– an area in which the primary goal is to protect and maintain First Nations' cultural, social and ceremonial uses.
- **Fin Island Wilderness Recreation Zone** – areas in which the primary goal is to promote and enhance specific wilderness-based recreational values and uses. This also includes the Hawk Bay Management Unit where an exception is made to support and sustain a commercial shellfish aquaculture opportunity.

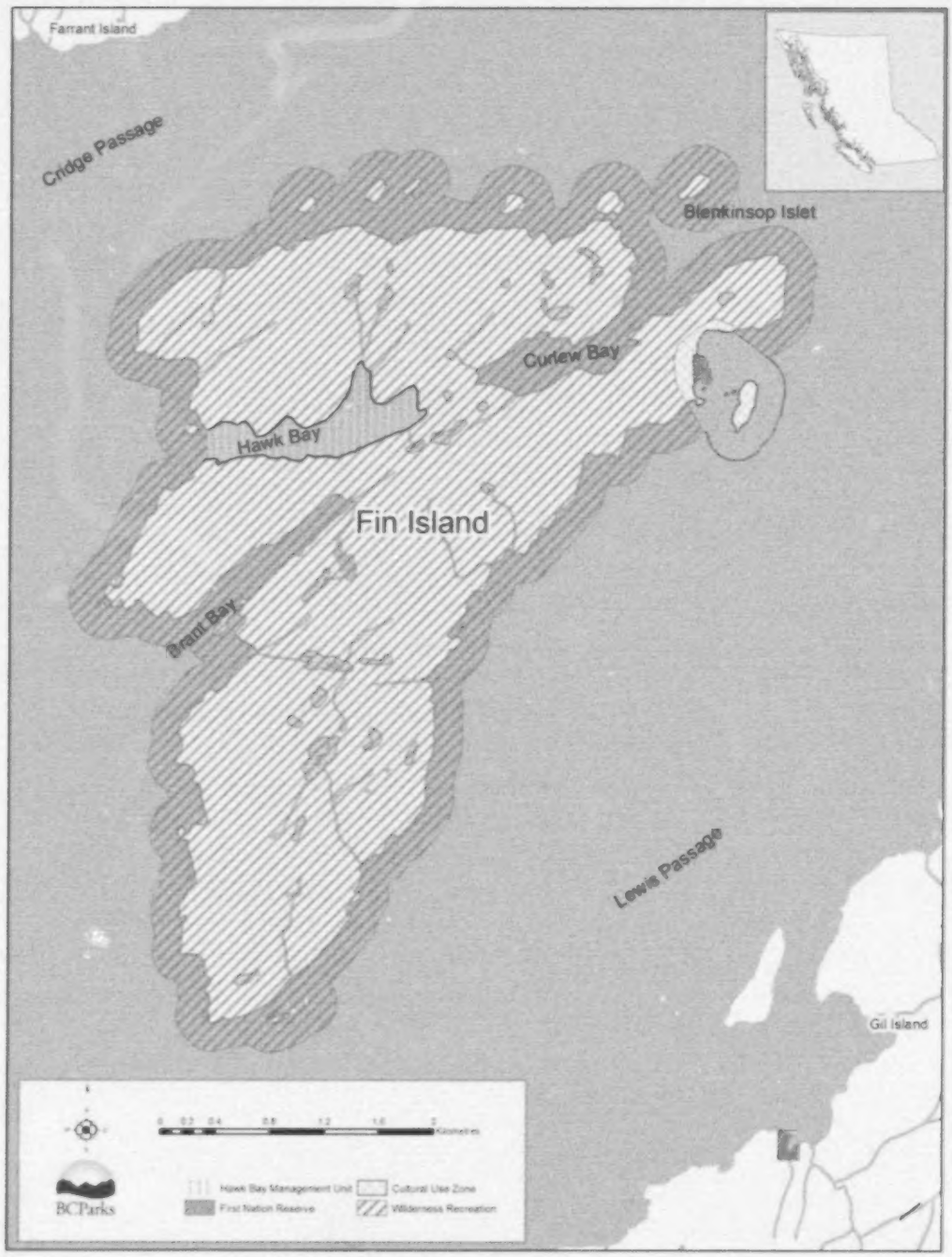

Figure 3. Management Zones in Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy.

Gitga'at Cultural Use Zone

The Gitga'at Cultural Use Zone covers 54 hectares – 3% of the conservancy including 42 hectares of marine foreshore. This zone, locally known as Clamstown, covers the clam beds, subtidal harvesting areas, and shell bench forests, and a tidally exposed sand bar connecting Fin Island to a small offshore island. The purpose of the Gitga'at Cultural Use Zone is to protect these features, while sustaining and promoting traditional First Nations harvesting and with a particular focus on clam harvesting.

Management activities in the Gitga'at Cultural Use Zone will focus on protecting natural and cultural values, ensuring public understanding of historic and current traditional use, and ensuring public use does not negatively affect current and future traditional harvesting activities (Table 6). Management efforts will be directed to ensuring that access to this area and the use of this area occurs in such a way that the clam beds continue to be safe and plentiful. Full achievement of this objective will require biotoxin monitoring by the federal government.

Table 6. Objectives, Issues, Results and Strategies for Gitga'at Cultural Use Zone

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Success Indicators
Provide for and promote Gitga'at and other First Nations' traditional and sustenance uses and harvesting activities.	Over-harvesting will cause declines in local stocks.	Monitor cultural harvesting in this zone.	No declines in the abundance and distribution of clams from current levels.
		Discourage recreational and commercial harvesting of clams in this zone.	
	Lack of resources in Hartley Bay for maintaining and enhancing traditional knowledge and harvesting practices.	Support efforts to provide cultural values information, with a particular emphasis on the values in this zone.	Increased community knowledge and use.
		Provide logistical support for local school field trips to utilize this zone.	
Provide visitors with safe cultural and wilderness recreation opportunities.	Hunters using the area at the same time as cultural activities are underway or school groups are present, could detract from the cultural experience and visitor safety. Because of current low hunting use and the deterrent created by the presence of the cabin, the area will generally see limited hunting use.	Do not include this zone within the hunting guide outfitting permit area, should a park use permit be applied for.	Safe visitor experience.
		Based on monitoring of visitor complaints, consider signage, and if issues continue to exist, pursue management options under the British Columbia Hunting Regulations.	Undisturbed cultural experience.

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Success Indicators
	Gitga'at has an interest in utilizing the Gitga'at cabin to support cultural tourism activities.	Use of the existing cabin to support cultural tourism is an appropriate use.	Cabin is utilized to support cultural tourism activities.

Fin Island Wilderness Recreation Zone

The Fin Island Wilderness Recreation Zone covers 1,857 hectares – 97% of the conservancy – including 626 hectares of marine foreshore.

The purpose of this zone is to establish an area within the conservancy in which the primary purpose is to provide wilderness recreation opportunities subject to the maintenance of the area's ecological values. Management activities in this zone will focus on providing wilderness recreation opportunities in an undisturbed landscape. Moorage may be developed along with basic facility development to support small pleasure craft. Management operations will focus on the design and construction of onshore camping and picnic facilities. In addition, there is a Natural Resource Use Management Unit in which an exception is made to allow for the development of a shellfish aquaculture operation.

Hawk Bay Natural Resource Use Management Unit

The purpose of the Hawk Bay Natural Resource Use Management Unit is to highlight an area where it is appropriate to consider the development of a shellfish aquaculture opportunity. The management unit covers 45 hectares – 3% of the conservancy, and includes Hawk Bay (43 hectares) and the immediate shoreline.

Hawk Bay is currently being used for commercial shellfish aquaculture by the Gitga'at First Nation, and this management plan provides for the continued investigation and development of this activity. Commercial operations will likely entail installation of multiple shellfish aquaculture rafts and related infrastructure such as on-site maintenance facilities.

Conservancy management activities will focus on ensuring shellfish operations do not adversely impact other conservancy values, and on ensuring other development or recreational opportunities occur in a manner that does not impact on the aquaculture operations (Table 7).

Table 7. Objectives, Issues, Results and Strategies for Hawk Bay Resource Use Management Unit

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Success Indicators
Provide for economic development activities that support diversification of the local economy, particularly First Nations.	It is not known if current use of Hawk Bay is adversely affecting shellfish aquaculture site quality.	Monitor effects of recreation use of Hawk Bay on the shellfish aquaculture site. If monitoring indicates negative effects, limit recreational access.	No contamination from sewage or bilge/petroleum discharge.

4.0 Plan Implementation

Implementation of the Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy Management Plan will involve working to implement identified strategies and achieve stated success indicators, focusing on implementing high priority strategies. Conservancy strategies and success indicators will be prioritized in terms of cost, feasibility and overall benefit to conservancy management.

Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy is part of the North Coast Land and Resource Management Plan area. Consequently, Ecosystem Based Management (EBM[10]) is practised in the area. It is expected that use and development of the conservancy will be consistent with or exceed EBM guidelines. EBM management in the surrounding area also depends on the contribution of protected area representation values. Use of the cultural zone and potential small camp development in either Brant or Curlew bays are expected to be the major sources of impact to the area's terrestrial values and are expected to be inconsequential to the overall application of EBM on the north coast or within the landscape unit.

4.1 Implementation Resources

It is expected that the Gitga'at Stewardship Program and BC Parks' operations programs will develop and maintain a collaborative work plan for the system of protected areas for the north coast and for Gitga'at territory. Items to be included in the work plan will include a description of the resources available during a given time period including staff and any additional operating or project funds that may support identified initiatives. BC Parks will seek project specific funding to implement priority strategies and monitor key success indicators, subject to provincial funding constraints. Specific projects will be evaluated for priority in relation to both a protected areas system and on a First Nation territory basis. Many of the initiatives contemplated are not funded as part of core ministry activities but they will be considered when jointly seeking funds from available funding sources either provincially or externally. The Gitga'at Stewardship Office will dedicate Stewardship Program staff and resources as conservation funding allocations permit.

It is also expected that park use permit holders will collect and provide information related to success indicators and the overall state of the conservancy. Such

[10] EBM is an adaptive approach to managing human activities that seeks to ensure the coexistence of healthy, fully functioning ecosystems and human communities. The intent is to maintain those spatial and temporal characteristics of ecosystems such that component species and ecological processes can be sustained and human well-being supported and improved. Specific implementation direction is contained in the North Coast Land and Resource Management Plan.

requirements will be defined in approved park use permits and in any protocols between the permittee and the Gitga'at Stewardship Office.

4.2 Priority Implementation

Implementation is initially expected to be focussed on collecting baseline data for the clam population in the Cultural Use Zone. The other key priority for this conservancy is to implement management strategies which support enhanced cultural use and cultural inventory information.

As part of developing ongoing work plans, priorities will be developed for implementation of strategies and success indicators. These priorities will be developed based on First Nation interests and on the Ministry of Environment interests taking into account the various protected area interests within a traditional territory and within the coastal protected area operations.

4.3 Bi-annual Report

Gitga'at Stewardship Program and the Ministry of Environment will collaborate to prepare a bi-annual report on system/territory basis describing progress on implementation of conservancy management plans.

4.4 Management Plan Review

Within eight years after the management plan is approved, it should be formally reviewed by the Ministry of Environment and the Gitga'at Stewardship Office. The management plan should be reviewed to examine implementation and strategy effectiveness in relation to success indicators and for ongoing relevance. Strategies, success indicators and implementation arrangements may be affirmed, revised or amended by agreement of the Gitga'at First Nation and the Ministry of Environment.

5.0 References

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Appendix 1: Appropriate Uses Table

The following table lists existing and potential future uses in the Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy. This is not an exhaustive list of uses that may be considered in this protected area.

The table is provided to summarize the uses which the management planning process has confirmed are <u>not</u> appropriate in Lax Kwil Dziidz/Fin Conservancy. The table also gives a general indication of the management direction for other uses. The table must be reviewed in conjunction with the other sections of the management plan, including the role descriptions, vision, objectives and strategies.

Appropriate Uses in Conservancy Zones and Management Units

Activity/Facility	Gitga'at Cultural Use Zone	Wilderness Recreation Zone	Hawk Bay Management Unit
Biological Diversity and Natural Environment Management			
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	N[1]	N	N
Fire Management (prescribed fire management)	N	N	N
Fire Management (prevention)	N[1]	N[1]	N[1]
Fire Management (suppression)	Y	N[1]	N[1]
Forest Insect/Disease Control	N[1]	N[1]	N[1]
Noxious Weed Control	N[1]	N[1]	N[1]
Scientific Research	Y	Y	Y
Social, Ceremonial and Cultural Uses of First Nations & Cultural Heritage			
Cultural, Ceremonial and Social Uses by First Nations	Y	Y	Y
Cultural Tourism	Y	Y	Y
Seaweed Harvesting by First Nations	Y	Y	Y
Recreation Management			
Aircraft Access[11]	Y	Y	Y
Anchorages	Y	Y	Y
Beach Activities (e.g., swimming)	Y	Y	Y
Boating (power)	Y	Y	Y
Boating (non-power)	Y	Y	Y
Camping – backcountry	Y	Y	N
Camping – boat accessible (separate from anchorages)	Y	Y	N
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	Y	Y	N
Commercial Recreation (no facilities)	Y	Y	Y
Fishing	Y	Y	Y
Heli-hiking	N	N	N
Hiking/Backpacking/Walking	Y	Y	Y

[11] Aircraft access to the Gitga'at Cultural Use Zone will only be permitted commercially for management purposes associated with the zone. Non -commercial air access will be discouraged.

Appendix 1 continued. Appropriate Uses in Conservancy Zones and Management Units.

Activity/Facility	Gitga'at Cultural Use Zone	Wilderness Recreation Zone	Hawk Bay Management Unit
Horse/Non-Exotic Pack Animal Use	N	N	N
Hunting	N	Y	Y
Mechanized Off-road Access (non-motorized – i.e., mountain biking)	N	N	N
Motorized Off-road Access (not snowmobiles – i.e., 4x4, motorcycles)	N	N	N
Off-road Access (non-mechanical – dog sleds, horse sleds)	N	N	N
Snowmobiling	N	N	N
Wildlife/Nature Viewing	Y	Y	Y
Backcountry Shelters	Y	Y	N
Fixed Roof Accommodation	Y	N	N
Interpretation and Information Buildings / Signs	Y	Y	Y
Trails hiking,	Y	Y	N
Wharves/docks	N	N	Y
Natural Resource Use Management			
Botanicals/Mushroom Harvesting	Y	Y	Y
Seaweed Harvesting (commercial)	N	N	N
Shellfish Aquaculture	N	N	Y
Guide Outfitting	N	Y	Y
Trapping	Y	Y	Y
Communication Sites	N	N	N
Utility Corridors (power/transmission lines and other rights-of-way)	N	N	N

Legend		
N	**Not an appropriate use in this zone**	• It has been confirmed during the management planning process that this use is not appropriate in this zone. • This may be an existing use which the management planning process has determined is no longer an appropriate use in this zone. The management plan details strategies for addressing this inappropriate use (e.g., phasing out, closing).
N1	**Expressed management purposes only**	• Not appropriate except for expressed management purposes as identified in the Management Plan; or • Not appropriate, but if the specific activity or facility existed at the time of establishment of the protected area, it is normally appropriate for it to continue
Y	**May be an appropriate use in this zone**	• This indicates that some degree or scale of this use may be appropriate. • For existing uses, the management plan will provide guidance on the appropriate level or scale of this use (e.g., direction to reduce, restrict or increase the current level of this activity) and may address specific restrictions or enhancements (e.g., capacity, appropriate sites, designated trails, purposes, party size, time of year, etc.). • For new or expanded uses, this does not constitute approval. This indicates that the use may be considered for further evaluation and possible approval (e.g., park use permit adjudication, completion of a review as part of the BC Parks' Impact Assessment Process). In some cases the appropriateness may not be confirmed until further assessments are completed.
N/A	**Not an applicable use in this zone**	• This is applied where it is not feasible for the use to take place in this zone (e.g., mooring buoys in a terrestrial zone).